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BOOK REVIEWS

The true La Fayette. By George Morgan. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott company, 1919. 488 p. \$2.50 net)

With Lafayette in America. With illustrations from old prints. By Octavia Roberts. (New York: Houghton Mifflin company, 1919. 294 p. \$5.00)

The publishers and the authors of these two books call attention, appropriately enough, to the opportuneness of the present for the appearance of works on Lafayette. Both books quote the sentiment attributed to General Pershing at Lafayette's tomb. Octavia Roberts quotes it thus: "Lafayette, we have come." Mr. Morgan, however, has the advantage, for he prints a letter, written at the dictation of General Pershing, which says that the words spoken by him were: "La Fayette, we are here." The variation in spelling of the name found in these quotations is maintained throughout the two books. "Lafayette" seems to be preferred at present by the best authorities.

Any author who publishes a biography with the title, "The *true* Someone," puts himself at a disadvantage in the hands of a reviewer. The question is naturally raised whether the boast and inferences of the title are warranted. The first six chapters of *The true La Fayette*, something more than half of the volume, and following Lafayette to the crisis of his career in the French revolution, are not as satisfactory as the last six chapters. The longest chapter in the book, "Campaigning in America," gives one at times a clear idea of the services of Lafayette, but in the attempt to link up his military activities with the larger military story of the American revolution the reader is at times confused. The chapters headed, "His crisis and his critics," "Five years in dungeon depths," "In Napoleon's time," "The great tour—5000 miles in America," "His last revolution (1830)," and "At La Grange—last days," are well written and the reader seldom senses a lack of unity.

There are sections in the book which are brilliantly done, but the work as a whole is slightly uneven and choppy. Occasionally this is the result of an over-affectation of the short sentence, in an endeavor to be emphatic or impressive; but, from a larger perspective, it is due to an abnormally large number of quotations from other works. A certain amount of quotation from source material is legitimate and, if from unpublished source material, frequently highly desirable; but to quote

incessantly from secondary material gives one the impression of a book compiled with scissors and paste. The author has evidently read nearly all the best material in print which deals with Lafayette and his quotations are, in the main, from reliable sources and well selected, but the book would have been improved had the author chosen to tell more of his story in his own way—which he shows at places can be an effective way—and not to call to his aid so frequently the phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or whole pages of other authors.

Nowhere in the volume is found a satisfactory and clear-cut statement, which many readers will look for, of the reasons which prompted French aid in the American revolution. The author is at least to be congratulated on not repeating the explanation that was frequently used as propaganda a few months ago—that the chief motive was founded in pure altruism and love of liberty. In the case of Lafayette in the American revolution it is difficult to be absolutely sure as to how much his course of action was prompted by a love of liberty and how much by discontent with the life of his class and by the craving of a high-spirited youth of means for adventure. The main theme in Mr. Morgan's book is Lafayette "the champion of liberty," and by the time the book is finished the reader has had presented to him virtually all the best material to show that Lafayette's one great creed was liberty.

The author does not succeed in simplifying the "complex matter" of the French revolution, as he purposes, but in explaining Lafayette's course he is more successful and puts the case for his interpretation quite convincingly. His view is that Lafayette, criticised and condemned by extreme monarchists and by extreme democrats, was a wholesomely conservative democrat, who favored a limited, constitutional monarchy of the British type.

It is clear that the author has been engaged in a labor of love, and the book is, as far as the reviewer knows, what the publishers claim for it—the best work in a single volume covering the whole of Lafayette's career in detail.

With Lafayette in America is a handsome piece of book-making on the part of the publishers. The paper is of a quality and the type and margins are of such size as to be considered luxurious in these days. In the opinion of the reviewer, however, the textual content of the volume does not warrant the lavishness with which excellent materials have been used.

The book is in two parts—one dealing with Lafayette in the American revolution, and the other with his visit to America in 1824-1825. Each part has eight chapters. The book is written for the most part in what is supposed to be the dramatic present tense—an affectation which may

be effective occasionally in the classroom, with elementary students, but which offends the historical sense of the scholar when encountered throughout most of an entire volume. Again, a large part of this book is devoted to imaginary conversations and emotions, conjured up by the author and attributed to the various characters introduced. Sensations and emotions are attributed even to rivers. The style of the book is such that the reviewer gained the impression that it must be intended for youthful readers, taking their first steps in American history, yet the publishers' statement and the "Foreword" contain no such hint. There are no footnotes, no bibliography, no direct references to sources used, and no index. The two phases of Lafayette's career treated in this volume are less satisfactorily presented than in two chapters of *The true La Fayette*. If the books are compared on the score of content value, and the price of Mr. Morgan's book is taken as a "fair price," the decimal point in the price of the one under consideration should precede and not follow the five. The book will be of little interest or value to readers of this REVIEW.

Handbook of aboriginal American antiquities. Part 1: Introductory, The lithic industries. By W. H. Holmes. [Smithsonian institution, Bureau of American ethnology, Bulletin 60 part 1] (Washington: Government printing office, 1919. 380 p.)

The *Handbook of American Indians*, published as Bulletin 30 of the Bureau of American ethnology some years ago, has proved so highly valuable a reference work that the bureau has determined to supplement it with a series of at least twelve handbooks covering in more comprehensive fashion the major divisions of Indian ethnology. In this series, the *Handbook of American Indian languages* has already been published; the present volume is the first part of a *Handbook of aboriginal American antiquities*.

"It is in large measure," says Mr. Holmes, "introductory to the systematic presentation of the antiquities; it deals with the scope of archeologic science, the character, extent, and classification of its subject matter, the progress of research; with the several important problems which present themselves for solution . . . with the ethnic characterization areas; with the acquirement of the substances employed in the arts; and finally with the manipulation of stone." A second volume, which it is to be hoped will follow soon, will be devoted to the implements, utensils, and other minor artifacts of stone.

Mr. Holmes' broad knowledge of the whole field of archaeology and his thorough familiarity with all the researches of the Bureau of American ethnology equip him especially well to write a reference book that